

In the Third Edition of *Jehovah's Witnesses Defended: An Answer to Scholars and Critics*, Greg Stafford takes up the familiar defense of subjects having to do with the use and pronunciation of the divine name, the identity of the biblical God Jah and of Jesus of Nazareth, as well as issues and questions having to do with salvation, God's sovereignty and mankind's "free will." This edition also contains discussions of several controversial issues, including questions related to abortion, a person's sexual orientation, and regarding uses of blood.

Most significantly, this book puts forth not only a defense of some the biblical teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses associated with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, but it also further introduces the Christian Witnesses of Jah, Jehovah's Witnesses who reject human traditions when these can be shown to contradict what is based on the best available reasons. Thus, a call is made to all Jehovah's Witnesses, to all Christians, indeed, to "every breathing thing" to bear witness to and to praise the biblical God Jah, and to acknowledge what can be shown to be true for good reasons about Jesus of Nazareth.—Psalm 150:6; Isaiah 29:13; 43:10, 12; Acts 18:24-28; Galatians 1:10; Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6.

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TO SCHOLARS  
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GREG STAFFORD



Murrieta, California

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God].”—*Berakhot* 9.5; see also *Sotah* 7.6; compare note 108 above.

***Evidence for the divine name in the NT.*** I turn now to the evidence for the use or non-use of the divine name in the NT. I have tried to show that there are good reasons for believing that during the time the NT was reportedly written (that is, before the end of the first century CE) all known Hebrew and Greek versions of the OT used a form of the divine name. We also can see from my discussion (see note 64) on the use of  $\text{I}\omega$  that Greek onomastica (early Greek lexical tools) frequently use the divine name when explaining the meaning of words that contain the name as a theophoric element. Having the divine name as a “theophoric element” means that the name (or a part of it) is used in other proper names. However, it is also a fact that after the first century CE we begin to see copies of both the LXX and Greek onomastica that contain surrogates for the divine name, such as “Lord” (Greek: *kyrios*) and “God” (Greek: *theos*).

As shown earlier in this chapter, all known pre-first-century CE Greek OT texts that preserve a portion of the OT text where the Hebrew has the divine name, use a form of the divine name in the Greek OT text itself. However, later copies of the Greek OT such as the Chester Beatty Papyri (second to the fourth century CE), the Bodmer Papyrus XXIV (from the third century CE), Codex Vaticanus (fourth century CE), Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century CE), and other manuscripts associated with the later Jewish or Christian LXX tradition do not use any form of the divine name. In the Chester Beatty Papyri, for example, where the divine name occurs in the quoted Hebrew OT, the Greek NT has in its place contracted and specially marked forms of Greek surrogates, such as  $\bar{\kappa}\zeta$  for the Greek word *kyrios* (“Lord”).<sup>134</sup>

These contracted, specially marked words are known as *nomina sacra* (“sacred names”). These special abbreviations are nowhere found in the LXX prior to the first century CE. But we

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<sup>134</sup> Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 1992), page 183, shows a picture of Eze 16:57-17:1 from the Chester Beatty Papyri where the sacred abbreviations for “God” and for “Lord” can be clearly seen.

do find them in copies of Greek OT texts and in NT Greek texts *after* the first century CE, as I will discuss later in this section. What is interesting here is that there is still an inconsistent use of the divine name in Greek onomastica after the first century CE. For example, as explained above in note 65, Origen gives the meaning of “Jeremiah” as μετεωρισμός Ιαω (*meteorismos Iao*, “Iao means ‘lifting up’”). But in Origen’s “homily on Jeremiah” the name is defined by means of the Greek word *theos*, not according to the actual theophoric element in Jeremiah’s name which associates it with *Iao*.<sup>135</sup> Regarding the change in divine names in the onomastica, Shaw concludes:

In general, the name appears to have been more heavily used in the earliest Christian copies of those originally Jewish onomastica that contained this [*Iao*] trigram. Then in such onomastica it was gradually replaced by κύριος [*kyrios*], θεός [*theos*], and, curiously, ἀόρατος [*aoratos*, meaning, “unseen”], or compilers and scribes simply deleted any translation of a given name’s theophoric element. Of course, this should be expected since “the evolution of Christian praxis has always been away from Jewish practices, not towards them,” since Jews who used Ιαω in a non-mystical way had probably ceased doing so by the heyday of the Christian onomastica, and since there is meager evidence that Christians used this name to any substantial extent. It would, though perhaps not quite as readily as the Hebrew Yahweh, have become less and less intelligible to Christians as time passed.<sup>136</sup>

Below I will offer a theory as to why Christians after the first century began to cease using the divine name and instead used sacred name abbreviations, and then eventually complete word substitutions for the divine name. But the primary question here has to do with what the NT writers themselves were likely to have used based on the best available evidence. The truth is, no one knows for sure what they used because all that we have today

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<sup>135</sup> See Shaw, “The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of Ιαω,” page 30, note 40, and page 43, note 110.

<sup>136</sup> Shaw, “The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of Ιαω,” pages 42-44.

are copies of the original NT texts and those copies are far enough removed from the date of their original composition that they could have been changed (just like some onomastic and Greek OT manuscripts appear to have been changed) with respect to their use of the divine name.

Indeed, it appears that the oldest NT manuscripts to quote a divine-name-containing OT text, but with a surrogate for the divine name in the quotation, are P<sup>46</sup> (for example, 1 Corinthians 14:21) and P<sup>66</sup> (for example, John 1:23). These manuscripts have been dated anywhere from the late-first to the late-second or early-third centuries CE. So at the very least P<sup>46</sup> is approximately fifty years removed from the date of its original composition, and quite possibly even one hundred years or more removed. The same can be said of P<sup>66</sup>.<sup>137</sup>

Thus, there is a considerable gap in time between the dates these documents (1 Corinthians and the Gospel of John) are believed to have been originally composed (middle to late first century CE, respectively) and the dates of these NT papyri. These are in fact the earliest copies of NT manuscripts that preserve a portion of the NT text that contains a quotation from the OT where in the OT the divine name occurs. There are some (such as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Christian Witnesses of Jah), who believe that during this "gap" the divine name was removed from the NT where it quoted the Greek or Hebrew OT text. The

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<sup>137</sup> Young Kyu Kim, "Paleographical Dating of P<sup>46</sup> to the Later First Century," *Biblica* 69 (1988), pages 248-261, has dated P<sup>46</sup> to somewhere near the third quarter, or early to the middle of the fourth quarter of the first century CE. P<sup>46</sup> contains most of Paul's letters and the book of Hebrews. But Kim's dating of P<sup>46</sup> has been disputed. In *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, eds. Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale, 2001), pages 205-206, a list of manuscripts that date from the late first to the second half of the second century CE is provided which more closely correspond to P<sup>46</sup> than do those used by Kim in his dating of P<sup>46</sup>. After then comparing P<sup>46</sup> with other manuscripts in the same Chester Beatty collection, the conclusion is reached that "P<sup>46</sup> belongs to an era after A.D. 81-96 (the era posited by Kim)—perhaps the middle of the second century" (*The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, page 106). A similar date is offered for P<sup>66</sup> (*The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, page 379). Both of these manuscripts are dated to around 200 CE by Kurt and Barbara Aland (see *The Text of the New Testament*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 2nd ed., Revised and Enlarged [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 1989], pages 57, 99, 100).

primary basis for this conclusion is the available manuscript evidence which shows that the OT text that would have been quoted by the NT writers contained a form of the divine name rather than surrogates like the sacred name abbreviations (*nomina sacra*).

There are others, however, such as Lundquist and Countess referenced earlier, who believe that the earliest NT copies we have show us just how the original NT document writers treated the divine name. If those who argue this way are correct, then the conclusion we must reach is that the NT writers, instead of quoting from the Hebrew or Greek OT texts before them, introduced a brand new way of representing the divine name (and possibly even other names or titles), but all without making any specific mention of this new practice. Further, in doing so the NT writers would had to have decided *not* to follow the use of the divine name in the Hebrew and Greek OT texts before them. I say this, because all available evidence before the second century CE shows that the OT texts available during that same time did in fact contain some form of the divine name.

**Nomina sacra.** The *nomina sacra* (Latin for “sacred names”) which have been mentioned already in this discussion are of special importance when we consider the use of the divine name in the NT. They are important not only in terms of what the original NT documents may have contained, but they are also important when it comes to answering questions about what should be used today when translating available Greek NT texts.

For example, if the original NT writers used *nomina sacra* then not one of the modern NT translations that I have seen is following this practice. In other words, if specially marked contractions such as  $\bar{\kappa}\zeta$  for words like “Lord” ( $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ , *kyrios*) were used in place of God’s name when an OT text was quoted, or if the NT writer simply decided to use these abbreviations apart from any OT quote then, again, no modern NT translation is using the same or a similar kind of specially marked abbreviation like the NT writers allegedly did. But back to the primary question: Did the original NT writers *begin* the practice of using *nomina sacra*? If they did not begin this practice then who did, and why?

If the NT writers did not start this practice of using *nomina sacra*, then what did the NT writers use for the divine name when quoting an OT Hebrew or Greek text that contained the name? Larry Hurtado has provided some of the more recent discussion on the use of the *nomina sacra*.<sup>138</sup> After noting the unique features and use of the *nomina sacra* as compared to other Greek literary devices (unique even when compared to Jewish scribal practices concerning their treatment of the divine name), Hurtado believes there is a “counterpart” between these Jewish scribal practices and the *nomina sacra* used in Christian texts. But Hurtado believes that the Christian *nomina sacra* “are both different in form from any of the Jewish scribal devices and comparatively more consistent in form.”<sup>139</sup> Hurtado concludes:

[I]t seems to me that the best reading of the evidence is that the *nomina sacra* represent a Christian innovation. Granted, the practice was, in all likelihood, indebted in some sense to the varied ways that Jewish scribes tried to mark off the divine name ... but the particular scribal techniques differ. For instance, the Christian innovation appears to include the standardized use of the supralinear stroke to mark off the words treated as *nomina sacra*, and the characteristic use of contracted abbreviations of these words seems likewise to be a distinctively Christian scribal convention. Moreover, the evidence indicates that Ἰησοῦς [“Jesus”], Κυριος [“Lord”], Θεος [“God”], and Χριστος [“Christ”] were treated as *nomina sacra* much more consistently, and probably earlier, than any of the other words in question. Finally, there are reasons to suspect that the whole scribal tradition may have begun with a distinctive writing of Ἰησοῦς as IH, and that this first happened among Jewish Christians or Christians sufficiently acquainted with Jewish traditions to devise and appreciate the gematria involved in this way of writing Jesus’ name.

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<sup>138</sup> See Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 2006), pages 95-134; “The Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Proposal,” *JBL* 117.4 (1998), pages 655-673.

<sup>139</sup> Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, page 105. See also pages 99-104.

“Gematria” involves “ascribing religious significance to the numerical value of alphabetic characters,”<sup>140</sup> such as we find in certain early Christian writings in relation to abbreviations of the name “Jesus,” or in the New Testament itself in places like Revelation 13:18 and 15:2 in regards to the “number of [the] name” of “the wild beast.”<sup>141</sup> Whether the use of *nomina sacra* involves any use of gematria (which seems unlikely overall since no other sacred name abbreviation [except one for “Jesus”] appears to have any numerical significance) is not as significant as the fact that we have in the *nomina sacra* a unique scribal device apparently invented by Christian scribes. Further, the *nomina sacra* may relate directly to Jewish or to Jewish Christian treatment of the divine name *after* the NT was written.

This brings us back to the questions I asked at the beginning of this sub-section. First, were the NT writers the originators of such “sacred name” surrogates? In other words, did Peter, Paul, James, John, or Luke use  $\overline{\kappa\zeta}$  rather than the divine name? Since there is no evidence anywhere outside of Christian circles for the use of such an abbreviation, if the first writers of the NT did invent this convention then why is there no mention of such a novelty anywhere in their writings? Also, it is of interest that there does not appear to be anything in the Christian traditions following the first century CE that teaches or even suggests that the *nomina sacra* began first with the writings of the NT.

Since as we have seen it was not uncommon to use one or more forms of the divine name (in paleo-Hebrew, Aramaic, or in Greek) in OT Greek texts during and prior to the first century CE, then the NT writers would have had no reason for some

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<sup>140</sup> Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, page 114.

<sup>141</sup> For a more complete discussion of the significance of names and numbers in early Christianity, see François Bovon, “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity,” *NTS* 47 (2001), pages 267, 288. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, page 114, notes that in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (9.7-8) and in Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 6.278-280) reference is made to the number 318, which the LXX of Gen 14:14 represents by the Greek letters TIH. These writings see in this numerical representation the name of Jesus (IH = 18) and the cross (T = 300), represented by the 318 servants of Abraham. See also Bovon, “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity,” pages 281-282, for a discussion of this abbreviation of Jesus’ name relative to Abraham’s 318 servants.

special remark about continuing that practice. If the NT writers used the divine name then they would simply have been doing what was consistent with all Hebrew and Greek OT texts that are known to have been available during that same time. But if the NT writers invented a new way of representing the divine and/or other names (such as by means of the *nomina sacra*), then one might have expected some explanation or discussion of this new practice at some point within the first few decades of the writing of the NT. This is especially so if use of the *nomina sacra* was seen as something newly inspired by influence from the holy spirit, or by the tradition started and then handed down by the apostles (compare 2 Thessalonians 2:15). Yet, there is no mention of this practice (use of *nomina sacra*) as having displaced use of God's name *first* in the writings of the NT.

The fact is no one knows for a certainty if the *nomina sacra* were invented by the NT writers. But there is no evidence that they adopted an existing Jewish practice and there is also no convincing evidence that they were used in the composition of the original NT documents. All that we have available to us today are copies of NT books and letters, the earliest of which are from the second, middle or late second,<sup>142</sup> and third centuries CE. Further, we have testimony from early scholars like Jerome (c. 342-c. 420 CE) and Gennadius of Marseilles (who wrote during the late fifth century CE), namely, that at least one of the NT writings was originally composed in Hebrew and that the writer faithfully followed the Hebrew text rather than the Greek texts available to him:

Matthew, also called Levi, apostle and aforesaid publican,  
composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Hebrew for

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<sup>142</sup> Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, Appendix 1, pages 217-224, has a useful chart of NT manuscripts, the earliest of which (P.Oxy. 4404 [P<sup>104</sup>]) he dates to "CE2late" (= late second century CE [see his page 217, number 93.]). But the earliest manuscripts containing *nomina sacra* are from "CE2-3" (second or third centuries CE [see his numbers 94. (P<sup>64</sup>) and 114. (P<sup>75</sup>)]). Compare my discussion on pages 76-79 and in note 137 above regarding P<sup>46</sup> and P<sup>66</sup>, the two oldest manuscripts that preserve an NT text *quoting* a divine-name-containing OT text but with a surrogate (*nomen sacrum*) for the divine name.

the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but this was afterwards translated into Greek though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been preserved until the present day in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it. In this it is to be noted that wherever the Evangelist, whether on his own account or in the person of our Lord the Saviour quotes the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew.<sup>143</sup>

Even if the first-century CE Greek translations of the OT did not have a form of the divine name (and all available manuscript evidences suggests that they did), the testimony above, namely, that when Matthew quotes “the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew” suggests that Matthew originally used the name found in the Hebrew text. If this testimony is accurate, then quotations in Matthew’s Gospel as found in Matthew 3:3, 4:4, 7, 10, 22:44, and 23:39 *must* have originally contained the divine name.<sup>144</sup>

That is, of course, unless there is an OT Hebrew/Aramaic text that Matthew quoted which itself did not use God’s name. But if both the OT Hebrew and the OT Greek versions available to Matthew contained a form of the divine name, and if Matthew faithfully quoted from them, then according to all available OT texts dated to Matthew’s time he would have used the divine name when quoting the OT. Thus, we cannot use later copies of the NT books and letters with what appear to be brand new scribal conventions (such as the *nomina sacra*) to answer the question about what the original NT writers *actually* used when quoting a Hebrew or a Greek OT text that contained a Hebrew (or

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<sup>143</sup> Jerome and Gennadius, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, NPNF 3, chap. 3, page 362.

<sup>144</sup> For a discussion of the Hebrew versions of Matthew’s Gospel available today, such as the versions of Jean du Tillet and Shem-Tob ben-Isaac ben Shaprut (referenced in the NWT and in the KIT as J<sup>1</sup> and J<sup>2</sup>, respectively) see the Second Edition of my *Jehovah’s Witnesses Defended: An Answer to Scholars and Critics* (Huntington Beach, CA: Elihu Books, 2000), pages 36-43.

paleo-Hebrew), an Aramaic, or a Greek form of the divine name. This question, like the question involving the pronunciation of the divine name, should be answered based on the best available evidence, with beliefs subsequently formed around those reasons.

The best available evidence clearly does not favor use of the *nomina sacra*, and even if it did then no one today is following this tradition by making use of the same written convention. The best available evidence is the available OT texts that could have been used by the NT writers. This includes OT fragments like 4QLXXLev<sup>b</sup>, 8HevXIIgr, P.Oxy. 3522, and P.Fouad 266<sup>b</sup>, all of which contain forms of the divine name rather than specially marked abbreviations, or even complete word surrogates.

Those who believe that the NT writers did in fact use *nomina sacra* for the divine name that is found nearly 7,000 times in the OT must explain the significance of manuscripts like P.Oxy. vii. 1007 (discussed briefly on page 75), which contains a fragment of the book of Genesis dated to the third century CE. This fragment not only uses a *yod* doubled with a line through it (~~י~~~~י~~) for the divine name (compare note 129 above) in Genesis 2:8 and 18, but it also uses a sacred name abbreviation for the Greek word for “God”! Additionally, in P.Oxy. 2745 (see note 64), known as the “Onomasticon of Hebrew Names,” the divine name Ιαω (*Iao*) occurs eight times in this third century CE papyrus when explaining OT biblical Hebrew names translated into Greek. But, in addition to the use of *Iao* throughout, the Greek word for “God” (as in P.Oxy. vii. 1007) is contracted as a *nomen sacrum* (“sacred name”)!

These two texts show that even if the NT writers did use *nomina sacra* that would not necessarily mean that they did not also use some other representation for or form of the divine name. Because these types of conventions are used in these two texts, scholars have had a hard time deciding whether or not these manuscripts are Jewish or Christian. But there is no reason why they cannot be the product of Christian Jews who retained a

special significance for the divine name, and who also adopted newer conventions for other sacred words (*nomina sacra*).<sup>145</sup>

No one knows the exact origin of these scribal conventions or the precise reasons why in some texts such as P.Oxy. vii. 1007 and P.Oxy. 2745 we find *different* representations for the divine name and for the *nomina sacra*. However, the best available evidence in the form of OT sources available for quotation by the NT writers strongly suggests that NT writers used the divine name that was found in such OT texts. It is true that in the oldest available NT documents *nomina sacra* are used, not a form of the divine name (except in Revelation 19 [see below]). But, again, the best available NT evidence in the form of such texts is at best fifty to one hundred years older than the date of the earliest NT documents (P<sup>46</sup> and P<sup>66</sup> [see page 78]).

The best available evidence, the evidence that I would use no matter what it suggested or contained, is the best of the older OT texts that could have served as the basis for the NT writers’ OT quotations. All such OT texts available today contain a form of the divine name, and it is best that we today use what that body of evidence tells us the NT writers most likely would have seen, read, and quoted: a form of the divine name.

Before moving on to the next section in which I will discuss the extent to which the divine name is used in the NWTNT, as well as the basis for its use according to the NWT Committee, it is good to ask and to answer the rest of the questions that I posed at the beginning of this sub-section: If the NT writers were not responsible for the use of *nomina sacra*, and if they in fact used a form of the divine name when they quoted from the OT, then who took it out of the NT? Related to this, it is good to also ask and answer why the divine name is not used in most OT Greek texts after the first century CE?

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<sup>145</sup> Compare Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, page 122, note 82: “In the first and second centuries CE, we can certainly see Christian group identity emerging, but a significant number of people can still be identified as both ‘Christian’ and ‘Jewish,’ and they felt no need or desire to identify themselves *exclusively* as one or the other. So we should not be surprised that some manuscripts exhibit a mixture of features that more typically distinguish Jewish and/or Christian scribal practices.”

***Greek philosophy and the removal of the divine name from Christian writings.*** We have already considered some of the evidence supporting the belief that the OT Greek scriptures and the NT writings prior to and during the first century CE used a Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek form of the divine name. Earlier in this chapter I also reviewed the OT biblical teaching concerning the use of God's name, which review showed clearly that there is no legitimate basis whatsoever for refusing to use a form of the name today. In fact, in the Bible God himself everywhere uses and encourages his people to use and to make known his distinct name. But if the OT and the NT writings in the first century CE used the divine name, then why is the name not used as often or even at all in Greek OT and NT texts during and after the middle or the late second century CE by Christians?

While certain manuscripts such as P.Oxy. vii. 1007 and P.Oxy. 2745 (both considered in the previous section) show signs of the divine name's continuance in biblical literature together with other literary conventions like the *nomina sacra*, these texts appear to be in the minority. The vast majority of NT and even OT Greek texts from the second and third centuries CE onward favor use of the *nomina sacra* or complete word surrogates for the divine name. But if the NT writers did not begin such substitution practices, why did this practice develop among Christians *after* the death of the apostles?

There are good reasons to believe that at some point those who claimed to be Christian altered their copies of the LXX by removing the divine name.<sup>146</sup> This is clear from a comparison of the manuscript evidence of what is undeniably pre-Christian Jewish fragments of the LXX (many of which were reviewed above) with later Christian manuscripts (such as Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Sinaiticus). If the Christians responsible for these LXX texts removed the divine name from the Greek OT

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<sup>146</sup> Compare Siegel, "The Employment of Paleo-Hebrew Characters for the Divine Names," page 160, note 4, "It was the Christians who replaced the Tetragrammaton by *kyrios*, when the Divine name written in Hebrew letters was not understood any more." See also, Kahle, "The Greek Bible and the Gospels," pages 613-621.

which they considered to be inspired,<sup>147</sup> it is not hard to understand how they could have done the same thing to those documents that early in the first or second century CE may not have been considered inspired by many of these same people.

Even if the NT documents were accepted as inspired writings by *all* second and third century CE Christian LXX users, if the OT Greek Bible was subject to alteration when it came to the divine name then removal of the divine name from the NT should not be rejected out of hand based on any similar view that may have been shared concerning the NT. We should look at the manuscript evidence that shows how the divine name was treated in what was considered to be holy scripture (that is, the Hebrew and the Greek OT). Then we can evaluate the evidence for use of the divine name in similar or in other types of documents (like the NT) that were used and preserved by the same people or by those who lived after them. Lundquist, however, has a different view, “It does not matter that the Apostles read the Tetragrammaton in their copies of the *Septuagint*.” He further reasons:

It does not even matter that the inspired writers [of the NT] quoted Hebrew Scripture verses which used the divine name. All of these things are true and verifiable. *All that matters is the word which the Christian Greek Scripture authors actually wrote under inspiration of God.* All translators must faithfully represent the exact words written by the inspired authors. If the Greek Scripture writers used the Tetragrammaton, then the divine name must be used in each of those instances. If the Greek Scripture writers used *Kyrios*, then the passage must be translated *Lord*.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> See Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, pages 68-94. Remarkably, Lundquist (*The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures*, page 161) claims, “It does not matter that the Tetragrammaton in the *Septuagint* was changed during the second and third centuries C.E.” Of course, it does matter. It shows the tendency on the part of the Christians at that time to remove the divine name from biblical documents, even if the documents were believed to be the product of divine inspiration.

<sup>148</sup> Lundquist, *The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures*, page 161. All emphasis in the above quote is original. Lundquist’s note at the end of the above quote emphasizes his point even further: “This is true even when the Hebrew Scriptures are clearly being quoted. The translator must reproduce for the English reader exactly that which the inspired author wrote.”

If Lundquist's view is correct, namely, that we should only translate what is in the *copies* that we have in our possession, the earliest of which is fifty to a hundred years or more removed from the original writing, then God or the inspired NT writers *did not follow this practice!* If Lundquist is truly intent on proving that God preserved his written word, and that we should do the same, then we should find Lundquist endorsing the Witnesses' view that the original NT documents *did* contain the divine name! Why? Again, because those who argue that the divine name was used in NT quotations of the OT are in a much better position to claim that God preserved his Word and that the NT writers 'faithfully represented the exact words written by the inspired [OT] authors', which is what Lundquist believes.

Those who claim as Lundquist does, namely, that the NT writers did not preserve God's name when quoting divine-name-containing OT texts, are arguing *against* the view that NT writers 'faithfully represented the exact words written by the inspired [OT] authors.' Lundquist, therefore, ends up in an argument not only with Jehovah's Witnesses, but also with himself, with the NT writers, and with even with God about the extent to which he would preserve his Word. That is why we find Lundquist making claims like (as quoted earlier) the "God who inspired Scripture will certainly take the necessary precautions to preserve it." Again, such a view is incompatible with Lundquist's own view that God chose to use *kyrios* in NT quotations of documents (the OT) that God is believed to have inspired. Lundquist's position regarding the use of the divine name in the NT suggests that God *did* fail to preserve what was actually written in his OT Hebrew word.

At the very least, the position adopted by Lundquist and others concerning the use of the divine name in the NT forces them to also conclude that the authors of the NT documents chose not to preserve the actual name of God from the inspired OT text in many instances. If Lundquist and others are going to suggest that God did not preserve his name from the OT to the NT, then why should we believe them when they state that God would "take the necessary precautions to preserve" what he had written in the NT? The pattern of God's acts shows that he will give us his name, and

allow others to decide whether to use it or to conceal it. In the end, the result will be the same:

**Psalm 102:15-18, 21-22 (NWT)**

And the nations will fear the name of Jehovah,  
 And all the kings of the earth your glory.  
 For Jehovah will certainly build up Zion;  
 He must appear in his glory.  
 He will certainly turn to the prayer of those stripped [of  
 everything],  
 And not despise their prayer.  
 This is written for the future generation;  
 And the people that is to be created will praise Jah.  
 For the name of Jehovah to be declared in Zion  
 And his praise in Jerusalem,  
 When the peoples are collected all together,  
 And the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.

Lundquist’s reasoning is flawed and he does not even appear to realize that ‘faithfully representing the exact words written by the inspired authors’ is what is in dispute. Lundquist thus begs the question when he claims that what we have in later copies of the NT, copies that have come to us complete with what appear to be novel scribal conventions (*nomina sacra*), are what “the Christian Greek Scripture authors actually wrote under inspiration of God” (from my quote of Lundquist on page 87). The manuscript evidence from before, during, and after the first century CE suggests that God allowed people to make decisions respecting what was written in the OT and in the NT, but he preserved enough evidence for us to make decisions about what he wants us to know respecting our use of and our love for his name.

There is good manuscript and other evidence supporting the belief that the divine name was removed from OT Greek texts and from the original NT documents. But there are also explicit statements and teachings from Christian authors of the second, third, and following centuries CE that tells us *why* some of these Christians chose to remove or conceal the unique name of God found in the OT. For example, the Greek apologist Justin Martyr (who died about 165 CE) taught that “Father,” “God,” “Creator,”

and “Lord” “are not names” (Greek: οὐκ ὀνόματά ἐστιν) “but appellations derived from His good deeds and functions.” Though Justin accepts the name “Jesus, as man and Saviour” as having significance,<sup>149</sup> he claims that “there is no name given” to the “Father of all, who is unbegotten” (Greek: Ὄνομα δὲ τῷ πάντων Πατρὶ θετὸν, ἀγεννήτω ὄντι, οὐκ ἔστιν).<sup>150</sup> Why does Justin assert that “there is no name given” to the Father when there is in fact a distinct name for God that occurs throughout the Hebrew and the Greek OT thousands of times? Justin explains, “For by whatever name He be called He has as His elder the person who gives Him the name.”<sup>151</sup>

Further, in his “Hortatory Address to the Greeks” (which may or may not be the actual work of Justin Martyr) Justin is said to have taught that “God cannot be called by any proper name, for names are given to mark out and distinguish their subject-matters, because these are many and diverse; but neither did any one exist before God who could give Him a name, nor did He Himself think it right to name Himself, seeing that He is one and unique.”<sup>152</sup> It is clear, then, that Justin had unbiblical motivations for not using or even recognizing a distinct name for God, in spite of the fact that the Hebrew Bible makes frequent use of a name that God did in fact give to himself.—Exodus 6:3; Isaiah 42:8.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>149</sup> ANF 1, page 190 (chap. 6 of Justin’s *Second Apology*).

<sup>150</sup> All of these quotations are from chap. 6 of Justin’s *Second Apology*, as translated in ANF 1, page 190. The Greek text for Justin that I am using is that of J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae Graeca* (Paris, 1857-66), vol. 6.

<sup>151</sup> ANF 1, page 190 (Greek: Ὅ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὀνόματι προσαγορεύηται, πρεσβύτερον ἔχει τὸν θέμενον τὸ ὄνομα).

<sup>152</sup> ANF 1, page 281 (with underlining). Regardless of whether these are truly Justin’s words, they further reveal that unbiblical concepts were tied to the use of God’s name after the first century CE. Indeed, in this reference it is said that to give God a name is tantamount to a compromise of his ‘uniqueness.’ But that is precisely what having a distinct name is meant to highlight: God’s uniqueness! This quote also suggests that God did not name himself, for someone would had to have preexisted him in order to “give Him a name.” Again, the motive for not using God’s name here is clearly expressed, and it is unbiblical. Compare also Justin’s reference to God as “a God who is called by no proper name” (*First Apology*, ANF 1, page 165, chap. 10).

<sup>153</sup> However, Justin may have taught a baptismal rite “learned from the apostles” where “there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again ... the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe ... calling him by this name alone.” But then Justin goes on to say, “For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God, and if any

Earlier in this chapter (see note 66) I showed how Clement of Alexandria knew the divine name. Of course, knowing the name is one thing and using it is quite another. With evident influence from and an expressed interest in Plato, Clement refers to Moses’ encounter with God in a cloud of darkness (compare Exodus 19:9) and to Paul’s statements in 2 Corinthians 12:4 and in Romans 11:33 as support of his view, in harmony with “the truth-loving Plato,” that God is “beyond expression by words.”<sup>154</sup> Clement even goes so far as to say that “the truly mystic word, respecting the unbegotten and His powers, ought to be concealed.”<sup>155</sup>

It is reasonable to believe that this “mystic word” is the same “mystic name of four letters” that Clement referred to earlier in his *Stromata*, quoted above in my note 66. In spite of his expressed knowledge of the “mystic name of four letters,” Clement leaves no room for doubt regarding his full appreciation for any name of God, saying that the Father of the universe “is without form and name” and that any name we might give Him is not ‘proper.’<sup>156</sup> Names are only given to God, according to Clement, so that we do not “err in other respects.”<sup>157</sup> But Clement then gives a reason similar to that of Justin (and to the author of the “Hortatory Address to the Greeks” [if it be someone other than Justin]) for not recognizing a true name for God, “Everything, then, which falls under a name, is originated, whether they will or not.”<sup>158</sup> Clement unabashedly admits, “I do not say His name”<sup>159</sup> and, again, he also explicitly taught that the name “ought to be concealed.”

Greek Christian writers like Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, as well as Greek Jews like Philo of Alexandria who lived and wrote during or after the first century CE, were clearly

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one dares to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness” (ANF 1, *The First Apology of Justin*, chap. 61, page 183). So it would appear that Justin did believe “the name of God the Father” which “no one can utter” was “pronounced over him who chooses to be born again” for a special “illumination,” but which was then (apparently) never uttered again.

<sup>154</sup> ANF 2, Book 5, chap. 12, page 463.

<sup>155</sup> ANF 2, Book 5, chap. 12, page 463 (underlining added).

<sup>156</sup> ANF 2, Book 5, chap. 12, page 464.

<sup>157</sup> ANF 2, Book 5, chap. 12, page 464.

<sup>158</sup> ANF 2, Book 5, chap. 12, page 464.

<sup>159</sup> ANF 2, Book 6, chap. 18, page 519.

influenced by their Hellenistic environment. This environment included the popular beliefs of Plato and other Greek philosophers, and the writings of those who were influenced by them. For example, Philo of Alexandria (who lived and who wrote during the first century CE) taught that “God indeed needs no name,” though he did recognize “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (spoken of in Exodus 3:15) as a name in which humankind “might be able to take refuge in prayers and supplications and not be deprived of comforting hopes.”<sup>160</sup> But Philo believes “it is a logical consequence that no personal name even can be properly assigned to the truly Existent.” In explaining the words of the angel in Genesis 32:29, Philo claims that the angel refused to tell Jacob his name because names are “symbols which indicate created beings,” which symbols we should not look for “in the case of imperishable natures.”<sup>161</sup>

Whether Philo's Greek biblical text contained a form of the divine name, as appears to be true for all LXX manuscripts available during Philo's time, is not clear.<sup>162</sup> What is clear is that regardless of what name may have been used in the Greek or in the Hebrew OT available to Philo, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and the writers of the other early Christian works referenced above, all of them give the same unbiblical excuses for not using the name of God: ‘what is named came into being’ or simply ‘God is unnamable.’ In this, they all contradict what the Hebrew OT and all known Greek LXX manuscripts prior to the first CE teach us about God's name.

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<sup>160</sup> Philo, *On Abraham* 51 (LCL 6, page 31).

<sup>161</sup> *On the Change of Names*, 11, 14 (LCL 5, pages 147, 151). In *De Deo* 1.4 Philo also writes, “For he [God] is unnamable” (see Siegert, “The Philonian Fragment *De Deo*,” page 5). See also my note 118, pages 69-70.

<sup>162</sup> However, James Roysse, “Philo, ΚΥΠΙΟΣ, and the Tetragrammaton,” in *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism*, vol. 3, David T. Runia, ed. (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1991), pages 179-183, argues that “the manuscript evidence very strongly indicates that Philo must have read the Biblical texts with the Tetragrammaton written in paleo-Hebrew or Aramaic letters, and not translated by κύριος [Lord].” Roysse points to, among other things, Philo's statements in *On Moses* 2.114-115 and 2.132 which suggest that Philo's knowledge that the tetragrammaton has four letters came from a biblical text, namely, his own Greek version which may have used a form of the divine name with four letters.

Philo, Justin, Clement, and other early Christian writers were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy, even to the point where they attempted to “derive Greek physics and philosophy from the Bible.”<sup>163</sup> We should therefore be careful when we consider their writings and learn to distinguish that which is biblical and that which is the result of Greek thinking that is at odds with the Bible. Though many early Christian and Jewish writers and philosophers of the first and following centuries CE knew of the divine name, and some, such as Philo, may even have had it in their Bible texts, they held to and expressed in their writings philosophical notions that clearly run contrary to what the Bible teaches. It is also possible that this same Greek philosophical thinking motivated others in the early centuries CE to use substitutes for the divine name in their writings.<sup>164</sup>

Further on this point, there is evidence even in the writings of Augustine of Hippo (354 CE to 430 CE) that Christians had by this time, in some measure, adopted an unbiblical understanding of certain Bible texts concerning the name and the nature of God directly from the writings of Philo. Augustine wrote the following paraphrase of Exodus 3:14 and 15:

‘First tell them [i.e. your people] that I am he who is, so that they may learn the distinction between being and non-being, and also be taught that no name at all properly describes me ... But if through their natural weakness they seek a *title*, reveal to them not only this, that I am God, but also that I am the God of the three men whose names express their excellence, God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob (*Mos.* 1.75-76).’<sup>165</sup>

Philo’s teaching is not only unbiblical in that his paraphrase of the biblical account is not an accurate representation of what

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<sup>163</sup> N.A. Dahl and Alan F. Segal, “Philo and the Rabbis on the Names of God,” *JSJ* 9 (1978), page 5.

<sup>164</sup> See my note 118 above.

<sup>165</sup> As translated in David T. Runia, “Philo of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Thought,” in *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism*, vol. 7, David T. Runia, ed. (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1995), page 146 (underlining added).

Exodus 3:14 and 15 teach, but Philo even *adds* words to God's response to Moses' request for his name (as recorded in Exodus 3:13-15), namely, "There is no name whatever that can properly be assigned to me, who am the only being to whom existence belongs."<sup>166</sup> God did not say this, at least not according to any biblical text we have available today. Again, Philo added these words to the account and he taught that it was wrong to give God a name, a belief that was then adopted by post-biblical Christians. Finally, in addition to what I presented earlier Philo also wrote explicitly that we need to have "some substitute for the divine name, so that they may approach if not the fact at least the name of supreme excellence and be brought into relation with it."<sup>167</sup>

Thus, there are good reasons for believing that many early Jewish and Christian writers taught that "there is no name whatever that can properly be assigned" to God, though this was in complete defiance of the words of the very same God whom these writers claim to quote and to reference.<sup>168</sup> Further, there is

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<sup>166</sup> *On the Life of Moses*, 1.14.75 (underlining added).

<sup>167</sup> *On the Change of Names*, 13 (underlining added).

<sup>168</sup> Consider also the statement by Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 2.275-276) who, after referencing this same account in Exodus involving the revelation of God's name to Moses, writes that he is "forbidden to speak" God's name. But, again, the Bible nowhere 'forbids' Josephus to speak the divine name. Consider, too, the statement by Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389 CE) in his *Orations* (30.17) as translated in F.W. Norris, "The Tetragrammaton in Gregory Nazianzen (Or. 30.17)," *Vigiliae Christianae* 43 (1989), page 339:

The divinity is not designated by its name. And this not only the arguments [above] demonstrate but also the wise and ancient Hebrews used special characters to venerate the divine and did not allow that the name of anything inferior to God should be written with the same letters as that of "God," on the ground that the divine should not have even this in common with our things.

There does not appear to be any reason for Norris to put "God" in quotes as if Gregory is here referring at all to the letters for the word "God," and Norris himself does not appear to conclude that this is the case. Rather, he writes that the use of "special characters" here "involves the use of paleo-Hebrew characters in the Hebrew text." Yet, Gregory himself uses a Greek OT text that omits such "special characters," for shortly after making the above comments he writes, "Lord, which is also called a name of God," citing Amos 9:6 in his version of the LXX, "I am the Lord Thy God, He says, that is My name; and, The Lord is His name" (30.18, as translated in NPNF 7, page 316). The latter half of the note (δ) in NPNF relative to these comments by Gregory is correct, namely, that "in the passages quoted [Amos 9:6], had the original language been used, the Four-Lettered Name would have appeared." Or it may also have

no evidence that any of these positions regarding the use of God’s name had anything to do with any accurate representation of what the Bible teaches. In fact, the stated reasons for not using the name, for ‘concealing’ it, and/or for using “some substitute for the divine name” all constitute strong evidence that, in fact, that is what happened to God’s name in both the LXX and the NT sometime after the first century CE.

***Hallelujah!*** It has often been said that the “Tetragrammaton was not used by the inspired Christian writers”<sup>169</sup> of the New Testament. I believe such claims are irresponsible and that they are not based on a broad enough consideration of the best available evidence. Such conclusions are in fact based almost exclusively on what we find in copies of the NT that are perhaps one hundred years or more removed from the original NT writings. Further, it is not necessary for the “Tetragrammaton” itself, the four-letter form of the Hebrew or Aramaic name for God (יהוה), to have been used in the NT in order for the divine name to have appeared. Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic forms of the three-letter (יהי or Ιαω) or the two-letter (יה or Ια) divine name could also have been used in the NT depending on what form of the name was in the OT text quoted or used by various NT writers.

When viewed in this light, even if we set aside the evidence considered earlier for the use of the divine name in the OT, and the special scribal convention of the *nomina sacra*, and the Greek philosophical reasons given by several early Christian and Jewish writers for ‘concealing’ the name of God, there are still at least four instances of God’s name in the NT. These four occurrences of the divine name are from the New Testament book of Revelation Chapter 19, in verses 1, 3, 4, 6. As noted earlier, the two-letter form of the divine name in Hebrew is today represented in square script as יה. This form of the name was used during the first and following centuries CE, and at times it was transliterated into Greek as Ια (*Ia*).

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appeared if Gregory had used a Greek version like the kind that Origen describes as “more accurate” (see above, page 72).

<sup>169</sup> Lundquist, *The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures*, page 150.

The two-letter form of God's name can be transliterated from Hebrew into English today as *Yah*, and it has been made into the English (Anglicized) word, "Jah." In its Hebrew stand-alone form "Jah" occurs at least 49 times in the OT. It is also used frequently as a prefix and as a suffix in compound names in- and outside of the Bible. Further, it is used at least 9 times standing alone or as a part of the expression "Hallelujah" in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, and 6 this same expression ("Hallelujah") occurs. In Hebrew this expression is a combination of two words, הללו (*halelu* ["praise"]) and יה (*Yah* ["Jah"]).<sup>170</sup> In modern printed editions of the Greek text of Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, and 6 we often find Ἀλληλουϊά, which is a transliteration of the Hebrew expression given in the preceding sentence. Like the Hebrew expression, the Greek transliteration is a combination or representation of the two Hebrew words in Greek, *allelou* ("praise") and *Ia* ("Jah").

In the most ancient manuscripts of the Greek text of Revelation this expression runs together without any spaces, just like most other Greek words in these texts. So it is not clear whether *Ia* occurred as a part of a single-word expression (as in our modern "Hallelujah") or if it was in fact the second of two words that together meant, "Praise Jah!" In either case, *Ia* in Revelation 19 is an undisputed instance of the divine name either standing alone or as part of an expression that involves 'praising' the God "Jah." It is this very name (*Ia*, "Jah") that writers like Theodoret represented as the Jewish pronunciation of the divine name in contrast to the Samaritan pronunciation (see the quotation at the end of my note 67).

Lundquist does not dispute that in Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, and 6 the divine name occurs as *Ia*. His point of interest, however, is limited to "whether or not the inspired Christian writers used the

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<sup>170</sup> Compare the occurrence of these words in the Hebrew of Ps 117, where we find in the first part of the verse *halelu* ("praise") followed by the Hebrew particle יהי (‘*et*), used in this case to identify the object of praise, that is, the divine name which follows it (the tetragrammaton). This string of words means exactly the same thing as the use of *haleluyah* (*halelu* + *yah*) at the end of Ps 117.

four Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton in their writing.”<sup>171</sup> But, really, whether the divine name occurs in the form of the tetragrammaton (the four-letter Hebrew/Aramaic form) or some other form (such as the Greek two- or three-letter transliterations *Ia* or *Iao*, respectively), the form of the name used is not the primary issue where Jehovah’s Witnesses are concerned. The real question is simply whether *any* form of the divine name was used in the NT. Related to this is the question of how that name should be represented and used today in translations of the OT and NT.

Indeed, as noted earlier in this chapter, the tetragrammaton may really be only another way of writing the divine name as it was pronounced through other forms, such as the three-letter form *Yaho* (Hebrew) or *Iao* (Greek), or even by the two-letter form *Yah* (Hebrew) or *Ia* (Greek). Thus, again, it is not simply the Hebrew/Aramaic tetragrammaton that is of interest to Jehovah’s Witnesses and to the Christian Witnesses of Jah, but *the use of the divine name in any form*. While Lundquist’s point of interest may be more narrowly related to the presence of the actual four-letter form of the divine name in the NT (for which there is credible manuscript evidence from OT source material quoted by NT writers), and though Lundquist accepts Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, and 6 as NT texts wherein “the divine name does, in fact, occur in the Christian Scriptures,”<sup>172</sup> he nonetheless observes and asks:

It is also interesting to note that the divine name was *not* removed from these four verses. To anyone familiar with the language background during the second and third centuries C.E., these four occurrences of the word *hallelujah* were obviously a reference to Jehovah. Why then, if there had been a heresy aimed at removing his name, were these verses overlooked?<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Lynn Lundquist, *The Divine Name in the New World Translation* (Portland, OR: Word Resources, 2001), page 58.

<sup>172</sup> Lundquist, *The Divine Name in the New World Translation*, page 57. See also, Lundquist, *The Divine Name in the New World Translation*, page 61, where Lundquist writes that “the divine name is undeniably used four times at Rev 19:1-6.”

<sup>173</sup> Lundquist, *The Divine Name in the New World Translation*, page 61.

I have already shown that writers of the first century CE and thereafter, such as Philo of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and the author of the "Hortatory Address to the Greeks," explicitly taught things about God's name and about naming God that are not biblical. In fact, such teachings stem from Platonic and neo-Platonic thought. It is also clear that the earliest Christian NT manuscript tradition reveals a scribal practice known as *nomina sacra* ("sacred names"), which involves the use of specially marked abbreviations that substitute for the divine name in NT quotations of the OT. I also noted earlier (see pages 80-81) that this use of *nomina sacra* is like certain Jewish scribal conventions where the divine name is similarly (but not exactly) marked or surrogated when it occurs in the OT or in related literature.

Therefore, it is undeniable that sometime prior to, during, and after the first century CE the divine name was being treated in ways that are not according to any articulated biblical teaching concerning its use and its pronunciation. The question is, did the NT writers continue or did they establish on their own some tradition concerning the use of the divine name (such as the *nomina sacra*), or did those who copied the NT begin the use of such conventions? If those who passed on the original NT writings were the first users of the *nomina sacra*, then what did the NT writers use? In this light, I again present Lundquist's question, "Why then, if there had been a heresy aimed at removing his name, were these verses [Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, and 6] overlooked?"

The answer is actually rather simple when considered in the context of the previously explained scribal treatments, manuscript variations, and Greek (unbiblical) philosophical views concerning the use of the divine name. Then there is the different ways that the words of the expression, "Praise Jah!" were considered during the time when Revelation was written or passed along. On this latter point, it is clear that there were at least three different schools of thought about the divine name that could have affected how a Jewish or a Jewish Christian scribe viewed the name *YH* (Hebrew) or *Ia* (Greek) when associated or used with the Hebrew word (or transliterated Greek) word for "praise." Consider:

According to the tradition in one School, Hallelujah consists of two separate words and the second word or the monosyllable *jah* is the Divine name. Hence in writing it the Scribe must treat it as such, sanctify it when copying it and in case of an error must not erase it which he is allowed to do with an ordinary mistake. In harmony with this School, therefore, הללו יה *Hallu* is the imperative plural, יה *jah* the Divine name is the object, and the phrase must be translated *praise ye Jehovah*. And there can hardly be any doubt that this exhibits the primitive reading which is uniformly followed in the Authorised [*sic*] Version and in the Revised Version. According to the second School, however, Hallelujah is one inseparable word and the termination *jah* simply denotes *power, might, ...* Whilst according to the third School, Hallelujah though undivided still contains the sacred name and is, therefore, divine.<sup>174</sup>

Ginsburg draws on the traditions regarding the understanding of “Hallelujah” in rabbinic thought through the Jerusalem (c. 350 CE) and Babylonian (late fourth century to early sixth century CE) Talmuds. These Talmuds contain Jewish rabbinic laws and customs found in the Mishnah (c. 200 CE), with discussions of it and debates over various rabbinic opinions. These traditions show that among religious Jews in the centuries following the writing of Revelation there were different views on the significance of the word “Hallelujah.” Revelation was not even accepted as a part of the New Testament canon until several centuries after it was written. Indeed, in the first Greek commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius (c. mid- to late-sixth or early seventh century CE), it is clear that by the time Revelation was accepted Christianity lost the biblical appreciation for the meaning of the divine name. After quoting Revelation 19:1-5, Oecumenius writes: “They were crying, [John] says, *Alleluia*. Allelulia is a Hebrew word; it means ‘Praise, laud God.’”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Christian D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (New York, NY: Ktav Publishing House, 1966), pages 378-379.

<sup>175</sup> John N. Suggit, *Oecumenius: Commentary on the Apocalypse*, vol. 112 of *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), page 157.

In the preceding paragraph I wrote that by at least the time of Oecumenius, Christianity had “lost the biblical appreciation for the meaning of the divine name.” I say this here because Oecumenius substitutes “God” for “Jah” when giving the meaning of “Alleluia”! Though Jah is God (compare Revelation 19:5), the original meaning of “Hallelujah” is not “Praise God” but “Praise Jah” or “Praise Jehovah.” This is “incontestably established by the parallelism”<sup>176</sup> of OT texts such as Psalm 135:3: “Praise Jah [*halelu+yah* (יה)], for Jehovah [יהוה, *YHWH*] is good. Make melody to his name, for it is pleasant.” By the time the book of Revelation was fully accepted as part of the NT, or given serious exposition as a Christian document (such as by Oecumenius), the significance of the divine name in “Hallelujah” was lost and its meaning distorted by people like Oecumenius to mean “Praise, laud God.”

Based on all of the preceding evidence, it is no real surprise to find that Christian scribes and commentators in the centuries following the actual writing of the book of Revelation left *alleluia* in the text of Revelation 19:1-6. They simply interpreted it to mean something other than what it actually meant, effectively eliminating the divine name from the meaning of the text even though the divine name is still there. But those who “Praise Jah” in Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, and 6 are not Jewish rabbis. They are not post-biblical Christian scribes or commentators. They are “a great crowd in heaven” (verses 1 and 3). They are “the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures” (verse 4). They are yet another “great crowd” whose voice is heard by John (verse 6). They are the Christian Witnesses of Jah, Jehovah’s Witnesses who reject the traditions of men where they invalidate teachings that for good reasons are attributable to both Jah God and to Jesus of Nazareth.

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<sup>176</sup> Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, page 379.